

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**April 17, 2003  
MEETING NO. 04-03**

**APPLICATION:** HDC03-0238

**DATE FILED:** March 24, 2003

**APPLICANT/  
OWNER:** Daniel Maddox  
217 W. Montgomery Ave.  
Rockville, MD 20850



**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:**

The subject property is a single-family residence that faces south on West Montgomery Avenue and is part of a row of late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses in the 200 block with deep setbacks. It is a typical Victorian house with a small annex building in the rear.

**PREVIOUS ACTIONS AT THIS ADDRESS:**

HDC02-0226 Request to re-side annex building with hardiplank lap siding. Approval given to re-side with in-kind material (wood) only, 9/19/02

**REQUEST:** The Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to remove three trees, replace a wood stockade fence with same along the north, east and west perimeter of property, and replace a portion of the wood fence with a decorative black iron fence parallel to front of house from the southeast corner to the east property line.



217 West Montgomery Avenue

1. *Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

This typical late Victorian house is representative of Rockville's 1889-1900 building boom following the opening of the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad in 1873.

Virginia "Jenny" Daingerfield Hodges purchased the lot from Margaret Beall in 1885 and the house and adjacent annex were built c. 1887. The house and annex served as the Hodges' Boarding House from 1888 to 1898. Summer visitors came to Rockville by train to enjoy the healthful benefits and pleasant surroundings. Some of the summer boarders who stayed there eventually built their own homes in the West end.

Professor W. Pinckney Mason, headmaster and French teacher at the Rockville Academy for more than 20 years, purchased 217 West Montgomery Avenue in 1898 from Jenny Hodge's sister, Maria, who had inherited the property after Jenny's death. Professor Mason often boarded out-of-town Academy students there. Mr. Mason was a descendent of two premier American families. His ancestors included George Mason of Gunston Hall, VA and William Pickney, U.S. Attorney General under President Madison.

2. *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.*

The 2 ½-story house is L-shaped and sheathed in board siding. The house has a cross gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. There is a small two-story, two-bay by two-bay annex in the rear yard and a one-car garage at the northwestern corner of the lot. The property includes several large oak trees that are more than 200 years old.



Fence to be replaced



3. *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

Most of the fence replacement is in-kind. The portion of the fence that is new meets the HDC guidelines for fencing in material and design. A fence may not exceed eight feet in height in the side or rear yard in the R-90 zone.

The City Forester approved the removal of the ash beside the garage as it is compromising the structure and the black cherry at the corner of the house because it is in declining health, has a double leader which represents a long-term safety issue, and shows multiple signs of decay. The City Forester also recommends removal of a large mulberry on the east side of the property in the rear yard and a mid-sized cedar on the east side property line. Although these trees were not included in this application, the City Forester noted that the mulberry is in severe decline and the cedar is dead. Both should be removed.

The Norway spruce by the driveway entrance was found to be in good condition. The applicant would like to remove it because it affects their satellite television reception, it does not allow the cherry tree under its canopy to fully bloom, and trucks along West Montgomery Avenue knock the branches off.

4. *To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent.*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the HDC approve application HDC03-0238 to replace fencing in-kind along the perimeter of the rear yard and to replace this fence with a black iron fence from the southeast corner of the house to the east property line. Staff also recommends that trees be removed per the City Forester's recommendations. The

Norway spruce immediately east of the driveway entrance is causing problems for the owners and staff does not believe that its removal would have a negative impact on the streetscape.